



Sharon Cromer - new Mission Director arrives

USAID/Nigeria welcomes its new Mission Director Sharon L. Cromer who arrived at post in Abuja on August 9, 2007. She replaces Pat Fleuret, who has been assigned to Khartoum, Sudan as USAID Mission Director.

Ms Cromer was sworn in as Mission Director in Washington on June 6, 2007. As a member of the Senior Foreign Service, Ms. Cromer has more than 20 years of experience in international economic and humanitarian development.



From 2002 to 2007, Ms. Cromer served as the Director in USAID's Mission in Ghana where she managed a dynamic program and a successful effort in donor coordination. Before her assignment to Ghana, Ms. Cromer served as the Deputy Director in USAID's Mission in Indonesia. From 1986 to 1997 she served in Washington, Pakistan, Cote D'Ivoire, and Senegal.

Born in Washington, D.C., Ms. Cromer is a graduate of Barnard College at Columbia University and has a law degree from Georgetown University.

Ms. Cromer and her husband Arnold Sobers, an accomplished artist, have two daughters, Courtney and Simone. Courtney just graduated from Barnard College (NY) and Simone from the George School (PA) this May and June respectively. Arnold Sobers, who has shown his work around the world, is a participant in the U.S. State Department's "Arts and Embassies" program. He has had works on display in the U.S. Ambassadors' residences in Indonesia and Ghana and will participate in the exhibition soon to be displayed at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Benin.

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USG / Nigeria PEPFAR team wins 'Spirit of PEPFAR' Award



What a team!

Ambassador John Campbell hosted members of the USG / Nigeria President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) team recently in Abuja to celebrate their achievement in winning the Spirit of PEPFAR Award. The Spirit of PEPFAR Award is given by the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) to honor country teams that exemplify the PEPFAR spirit of coordination. The award recognizes coordination among USG agencies in country, with other donors, with the government, and with new partners as well as high levels of success delivering treatment, prevention, care and support interventions. In previous years, Teams in Zambia and Rwanda have also received the award.

The award was given to the Nigeria Team for its effectiveness in working to achieve Emergency Plan goals, supporting sustainable and innovative programs, cooperating across agencies, engaging new partners, coordinating the efforts of all stakeholders, and communicating these efforts to the Nigerian public. The award was presented to the Nigeria team by Michele Moloney-Kitts, OGAC's Director of Program Services during the Annual Implementers Conference in Rwanda. Members of the USG PEPFAR team in Nigeria include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), USAID, Department of Defense, National Institutes of Health and the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy. Upon their return to Nigeria, Ambassador Campbell, assisted by the USAID Acting Mission Director, Latanya Mapp Frett, the CDC Country Director,

John Vertefeuille and the DOD Director, Major Darrell Singer, presented certificates to members of the team at ceremony to honor the USG/Nigeria team for this achievement.



USAID PEPFAR team with Ambassador Campbell

Under the leadership of Ambassador Campbell, the USG/Nigeria team has grown from fewer than twenty people to about 200 staff across five agencies. The Ambassador's work as co-chairman of the steering coordination committee with the former minister of health, Professor Eytayo Lambo as well as his overall leadership and support encouraged the strong collaboration that enabled the team to win The Spirit of PEPFAR Award.

Through the PEPFAR initiative, the U.S. Government has made significant contributions to Nigeria's response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The 2005 sentinel survey shows that prevalence rates are holding stable, and more and more people are accessing treatment they need. To date, the USG remains the largest donor for HIV/AIDS activities in Nigeria. Funding in Nigeria has increased from \$26 million in 2004 to \$304 million in 2007.

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Positive Living project graduates 27 counselors



Counselors Mrs Bernadette Ughwovwan and colleague Mrs Felicia Agwuenu

Mrs. Bernadette Ughwovwan is a nurse and a renewed champion for improved care and support of people living with HIV in Nigeria.

She has dedicated herself to fighting AIDS as an official with the Nigeria chapter of the Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAAN). Now, through the Positive Living project funded by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and USAID, she is building the skills of many more outreach workers to extend HIV/AIDS information, care and support into normally hard-to-reach communities.

To improve her skills, Bernadette participated in a series of training of trainer sessions held by USAID implementing partner Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), which implements the Positive Living program with other local partners, including the Anglican Communion of Nigeria and the National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs.

She is one of 27 new master trainers under the project, who have in turn trained more than 140 people, now empowering hundreds more volunteer health and outreach workers all over the country.

Recently, at the motor park in Abuja, volunteers set up a mobile voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) clinic, seeking to reach commuting workers who do not normally access formal health services.

At the clinic, they educated passers-by about HIV transmission and treatment of AIDS, debunking many myths and untruths during the advocacy sessions. Bernadette says that today, many Nigerians have heard about AIDS but they have many misconceptions and sometimes rely on unproven traditional treatments and herbs. Some people, she says, do not know that medical interventions exist.

More than 40 people were tested by doctors at the recent mobile VCT clinic at the Wuse Park recently. Those who tested positive received onsite counseling and were referred to hospitals for follow up testing and care. They were encouraged to bring in their partners and newborns for testing as well.

Positive Living volunteers are also visiting families to improve home-based care for people living with HIV/AIDS. In addition to providing information, Bernadette sees her role as providing hope.

"We tell them it is not like before when there was no hope," she says. Now with access to anti-retroviral drugs and health care "you can have so many years to live," she says.

GHAIN commissions 8th ART center in Cross River

USAID partner, Global HIV/AIDS Initiative Nigeria (GHAIN) commissioned its eighth Anti-Retroviral (ART) center in Cross River state recently. Located within the Obanliku General Hospital in the northern part of the state, the center serves the Obudu, Boki and Obanliku local government areas. The assistance was provided by USAID/Nigeria through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS relief (PEPFAR).

GHAIN pioneered ART centers in the state in 2004. The eight centers in the state are supplemented with 42 Counseling and Testing (CT) facilities. During the recent commissioning, the medical superintendent of the facility, Dr. K. Aya referred to stigmatization as a challenge in combating HIV/AIDS. He encouraged all present to find

out their HIV status as a way of reducing the stigma. GHAIN program manager in the state Dr. Sylvester Ebaye commended the Cross River state government for creating an enabling environment for GHAIN to provide ART services.

USAID boosts emergency obstetric and newborn care in Nigeria



Health care providers practice providing emergency obstetric and newborn care during training in Gusau, Zamfara state. Photo by Emmanuel Otolorin

USAID has trained nine doctors and 19 nurse/midwives in emergency obstetric and newborn care services to strengthen the performance of health care providers in USAID-funded facilities in Gusau, Zamfara state. The training was conducted by USAID implementing partner ACCESS, who are increasing the use of quality emergency obstetric and newborn care services among pregnant women, mothers and their children in Zamfara and Kano states. Maternal mortality remains a major health problem in Nigeria. Increasing the proportion of births attended by qualified health workers, access to proper emergency obstetric care (EOC) and sponsorship of community-based maternal and newborn care interventions are keys to reducing maternal mortality. USAID is supporting the promotion of obstetric care services which are acceptable to the community and which are of value to mothers-to-be.

USAID is also working with other donors to increase skilled attendance at birth, provide emergency obstetric care, and increase the

use of appropriate childbirth practices and essential newborn care (drying the baby, warmth, cleanliness and early exclusive breastfeeding) at home.

These doctors and nurses attended three weeks of training spent on theory and clinical practice, while two weeks were spent in the King Fahd Hospital, Gusau for hands-on practical sessions with clients.

In the last one year, about 2,500 birth deliveries have been made by trained birth attendants, while roughly 10,000 patients have attended ante-natal care visits by trained care providers.

Training workshop on psycho-social support for children

USAID partner, HOPE Worldwide Nigeria (HWN) recently held a five-day Trainer of Trainers workshop on children and psycho-social support in Ikorodu, Lagos state.

The training was designed to guide the facilitators in transferring skills and knowledge to the participants for adequate care and support for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in their communities.



USAID Nigeria OVC Senior Program Manager, Dr Ochi Ibe at the workshop

The objective of the training is to build the capacity of trainees to become trainers of trainers, eventually transferring knowledge gained to their host communities. This would facilitate the involvement of stakeholders at various levels of government and community to be more responsive to the needs of orphans and other vulnerable children.

About 1.7 million Nigerian children are orphaned by AIDS, according to United Nations estimates in 2004.

The participants were strategically drawn from agriculture and rural development, education and health departments in the Shomolu, Ikorodu, Epe and Badagry local government areas of the state where HWN is presently implementing OVC programs. A total of 26 participants including members of Society for Family Health, Rotarians and Columbia University-ICAP) were also trained by USAID and HWN.

USAID / Washington, through the Africa Network for Children at Risk (ANCHOR) project provides funds for training and community mobilization as well as service delivery, especially education psychosocial support and health for the OVC.

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USAID, others build seed storage units in Kano, Kaduna

Two storage facilities were commissioned in Kano state by Ambassador John Campbell recently. The stores were constructed as a joint project with Kano and Kaduna state governments and US Office of Defense Cooperation. Also facilitating this project are International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Department of State and USAID. Three more stores in Kano and Kaduna states are being constructed under the scheme.

The storage facilities are located at Darki in Wudil local government area and Garko in Garko local area. Three more stores are being constructed at Sarina in Kano state, and Yarumfa and Zaria in Kaduna state.

The seed storage project will provide safe and secure seed storage with educational facilities to these five communities. The primary objective of this program is to strengthen international relationships and improve infrastructure for the host nation and ameliorate significant suffering.

Nearly half of grains harvested in northern Nigeria are lost due to lack of storage facilities and poor processing methods.



Ambassador John Campbell commissioning one of the stores



Hajia Tabawa Dahiru, chairperson Cowpea Farmers Association, Garko receiving keys to the Garko store



Ambassador Campbell with members of Garko cooperative at the Garko store

Photos by Idika Onyukwu (PAS)

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Nigerian government budgets \$135,000 for injection safety activities

Nigeria has made provision in the Federal Ministry of Health budget for the year 2007 to address and promote safe injection and proper management practices for biomedical waste. \$ 64,843 has been earmarked for training in tertiary institutions, while \$70,312 is for the purchase of injection safety commodities for these facilities. The approval was given for this provision through efforts made by the National AIDS and STI Control Program (NASCP). NASCP is a Nigerian government initiative that partners with USAID in fighting HIV/AIDS.

This is Nigeria's first budget allocation for the promotion of injection safety.

USAID partner, Making Medical Injections Safer (MMIS) advocated to and collaborated with the Nigerian government to budget and mobilize these resources. Working together, the outcome of this partnership and collaboration is the development and ratification of the Nigerian National Health Care Waste Management (HCWM) plan and guidelines by national and state stakeholders last June.

Making Medical Injections Safer (MMIS) project is funded by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through USAID and is currently working in five Nigerian states (Anambra, Cross River, Edo, Lagos and Kano) and the Federal Capital Territory. Infection prevention and control with emphasis on universal safety precaution and injection safety is one of the five priority areas in the President's Emergency Plan.

MMIS is implementing the strategy recommended by the Safe Injection Global Network (SIGN) which includes commodity management to support estimation, procurement and distribution of safe injection commodities.

The ministry of health will be conducting a training of trainers for thirty health care providers from six zones as an initial step before cascading the training at facility level.

Technical assistance is to be provided by the MMIS project in collaboration with USAID.

62 undergo Avian Influenza training

48 veterinarians have attended workshops on how to use the latest in Avian Influenza (AI) response equipment. The trainings, which were funded by USAID, were held in Abuja, Enugu, Kano, Gombe and Lagos. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) provided technical support. Also, 14 journalists have undergone media orientation training for AI provided by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), a USAID implementing partner.

In February 2006 Nigeria reported the first outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in sub Saharan Africa. Since that time the disease has plagued Nigeria's poultry industry causing millions of Naira losses to the industry. In addition to the damaging effects to the commercial poultry industry, livelihoods and resources of Nigeria's rural populace have been impacted negatively.

It is imperative for Nigeria's veterinary health care professionals to detect, contain, and eradicate the disease in order to avoid a calamity of grand scale from starting on Nigeria's soil.

SUCCESS STORIES

Polio victim gets a new lease on life, one she won't give up



Karimatu (center) talks about her learning experience at the Kano Polio Victims Trust Association Adult Literacy program
Photo: Mohammed Jiya-Doko, COMPASS Kano

In her haste, twenty-one-year-old Karimatu Salisu almost tripped over her crutches as she excitedly made her way to the Kano Polio Victims Trust Association (KVPTA) adult literacy classes. It was her first day in school after the break, and she had looked forward to every bit of it, especially because she had an interesting story to share.

According to her mother, Karimatu contracted polio when she was five; the virus led to the paralysis of her left leg. After several unsuccessful years searching for a cure, her anxious parents could only hope to give her in marriage to any man who would care for her.

Too often polio victims are robbed of their dignity and the opportunity to lead a productive and fulfilling life. Frequently marginalized, most are forced to beg to survive. Through USAID support to KPVT, the Association is reducing the stigma and discrimination polio victims experience by teaching them the skills and knowledge they need to be self-sufficient and less dependent on charity. The adult literacy program is one of several successful approaches, and the program has already graduated 50 members and is training 100 others.

In a narration exercise, students shared their experiences during the holidays. During her turn, Karimatu recounted how the literacy program had changed her friends' perspectives and broadened her own vision. Outside her friend's house one afternoon, Karimatu looked up and was able to read a sign post: it said "Lokon Makera", giving directions to their ward. "The sign

post was always there, but we were never able to make any meaning of it,” she said. She and her friends wondered how many other important pieces of information they passed by unknowingly. “We have been proud of her ability to read ever since” said her friends Fati Ahmed and Binta Ado.

Though Karimatu and her friends joined the KPVTA at the same time, she gained the opportunity through the entrance test to join 99 others in the second phase of the literacy program. Inspired by their friend’s performance, Fati and Binta are now looking forward to competing with about 600 other members of KPVTA, should another opportunity emerge. “I think the lack of education amongst polio victims is one of the reasons why the majority is engaged in street begging. Karimatu’s new ability to read makes me proud, and I hope to try again when there is an opening,” said Fati.

In addition to giving her literacy skills, the program has inspired Karimatu to strive for greater achievements. She now plans to establish evening classes for out-of-school teenage polio victims in her community and to encourage parents to enroll their children in formal schools. “My main interest,” she said, “is to persuade parents to give their children an opportunity to learn now. It may be too late to wait until later.”

Karimatu herself has a new lease on life – an opportunity to learn, teach others, and further her goals. She currently teaches Fati and Binta some of the things she learns in school, while waiting to graduate from the literacy program in September 2007. “I won’t stop now,” she said, “my goal is to get a university degree.”

USAID is aiming to immunize five million children against polio to check transmission by September 2007. USAID is also continuously engaging the media and local partners to mobilize to create awareness of the need to immunize children against polio.

Grassroots initiative broadens access to antenatal care, promotes ownership **Abuja, Nigeria**

At the village square, the town crier beat his gong to invite members of Gudun-Karya and surrounding communities in the Federal Capital Territory to another market day. As usual, traders rushed to display assorted products in readiness for four days of selling. Close by, another group was busy setting the stage. They were placing tables and chairs in a make-shift consultation area in preparation for a market outreach intended to increase knowledge of, and provide access to antenatal care services.

In Gudun-Karya, a predominantly farming and trading community of 10,000, women rarely seek professional help during pregnancy. Their priority is spending time at the farm or in the market earning to take care of their families. The cost of drugs also discourages ante-natal care attendance. In response, USAID through its Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector (COMPASS) project supported initiatives by community coalitions to organize market outreach days. “That way, women could be at the market and attend antenatal care as well,” said COMPASS FCT team leader Fatima Bunza.

Through dance and songs, community coalition members and health professionals attract women to the make-shift consultation area, where they hear messages on the importance of seeking antenatal care services during pregnancy. Since market days attract many people, it also offers an opportunity to integrate reproductive health, family planning, and child health messages. Members of the community can meet with healthcare personnel, who conduct routine checks, dispense drugs, and make referrals as necessary.

So far, 1,848 women, 1,311 children and 252 men have received healthcare services through the market programs. Communities in the six area councils are now seeking further support from other organizations for additional drugs and medical expertise, so they can organize the events on a more frequent basis.

USAID promotes civil participation in economic legislation

USAID/Nigeria partner, PACT has been actively involved in engendering civil society to engage with government and the legislature. This has resulted in the passage of three bills into law by the National Assembly. The laws, if effectively employed will, in the medium to long term, stimulate economic activity in Nigeria, give foreign investors more confidence and boost the fight against corruption. They are: the Fiscal Responsibility Law, Public Procurement Law and the Nigerian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative Law.

Through its Advocacy, Awareness and Civic Empowerment (ADVANCE) program implemented by PACT, USAID has been able to promote legal reform, anti-corruption and budget reform advocacy between civil society, local non-governmental organizations, the legislature, government and other stakeholders. USAID is spending about \$8 million over five years to build civil society's capacity to advocate for policy reform, demand good governance, advocate anti-corruption issues to ensure a better, more transparent and accountable government and build productive partnerships between civil society

organizations and the Nigerian government to fight corruption.

ADVANCE is also facilitating civil society participation in economic governance through budget tracking at both national and state levels, providing critical inputs into the government's National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy and the Mid Term economic review process in addition strengthening the media to better report governance and the reform process.

The ADVANCE project has over the last two years been increasing public awareness through dialogues with stakeholders, publishing policy documents for dissemination, capacity building trainings and using the media as an advocacy tool.

In another development, nearly 6,000 Nigerians have undergone training in civil society strengthening, anti-corruption and anti-trafficking under the auspices of the ADVANCE project since activities started in 2005. Currently ADVANCE is providing funding and technical support to 13 local organizations with focus on Kano, Rivers and Lagos states.

ALBUM

Send-forths, Power-Claps and a Welcome!



Ann Oden...

Ann Oden (left) receiving a farewell gift from Sandy Ojikutu, Education Team Leader recently. Ann is now Chairperson, Cross River state Planning Commission and Adviser to the Governor on International Development.

Our dear Steve...



It was during tributes at Steve Herbaly's send-forth that the Mission was stunned when they were informed that he had saved someone's life in USAID/Washington through mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

We in Abuja will miss this gentleman for his generous spirit and uncommon sensitivity to the less fortunate. Steve has recently assumed the duties of General Development Officer in Beirut, Lebanon. Above is Steve with the Nigerian Governing Justly and Democratically Team, and getting ready for the Mission's Power-Clap.

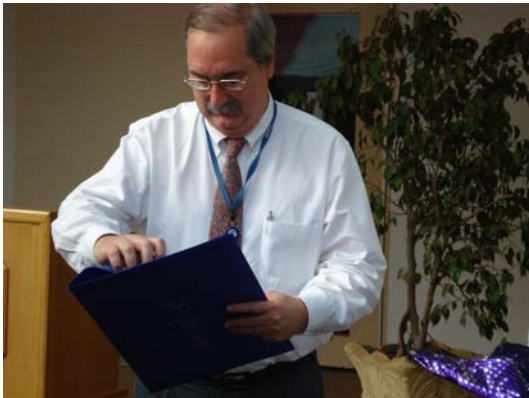
And Polly too



Polly Dunford, General Development Officer also left for the USAID/Mozambique Mission. We shall miss her and her lovely family. Here is the 'Before and After' of the Power-Clap!



Farewell



Pat Fleuret, former USAID/Nigeria Mission Director was sent off in an emotion laden ceremony last May. Praises and kudos generously flowed from all present. Team leaders and implementing partners acknowledged his purposeful leadership and team spirit. Nigerian staff noted his concern and help, enabling them to become house-owners (See Pat visiting a completed house at Sunnyvale Estate – bottom right.) In his response, he praised the efforts of his wife, Anne in his sojourns all over Africa; and attributed his successes to her. Pictures show events at the reception – with of course, the inevitable Power-Clap. Pat Fleuret is going to head USAID's Mission in Khartoum, Sudan. We wish him the best!

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“You are welcome!”



New Mission Director, Sharon Cromer (center) being welcomed to USAID/Nigeria at a reception recently

USAID/Nigeria interns – Class of 2007



Tiffany, Curtis and William

The summer of 2007 witnessed the presence of three graduate school interns in the Mission thanks to the newly created Partnership Office at USAID/Nigeria. Tiffany Williams, William Schmitt, and Curtis Valentine were chosen to serve for 8-10

weeks in USAID/Nigeria's Abuja office. They were selected on the basis of on their prior experience, current areas of study, and future goals in international development.

Tiffany, who is studying nutrition at Tuskegee University's School of Agricultural, Environmental and Natural Sciences in Alabama, provided assistance to USAID programs in child survival and reproductive health. The internship availed Tiffany the opportunity to observe the Mission's work to improve maternal and child nutrition.

William, a student at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Washington D.C., divided his time between the Governing Justly and Democratically (GJD) team and the Partnership Office. Assisting with monitoring & evaluation, proposal review, and partnership development, he was able to use the skills he honed serving as a missionary in Kenya in the Nigerian context.

Curtis, who is currently studying public policy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government in Massachusetts, served with the Partnership Office. The internship brought Curtis to Abuja for the second time; he previously served as Acting Country Director for a USAID Implementing Partner, Africare, in 2005. While with the Partnerships Office, Curtis was charged with nurturing potential public-private partnerships as well as shepherding along existing public-private partnerships. In all, the internship program was a success for the interns and the offices and staff they assisted.

ABUJA DATELINE is the electronic newsletter of USAID/Nigeria. The journal publishes on programs implemented by USAID and its local and international partners. To request copies of this newsletter, please contact Eburn Aleshinloye at eareshinloye@usaid.gov